



SILVER SPRING URBAN DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

April 29, 2013

Councilmember Roger Berliner, Chairman
Transportation Committee
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

RE: Silver Spring Parking Lot District Rate

Dear Councilmember Berliner:

As Chairman and on behalf of the Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee, this correspondence is written in direct opposition to the Council's Staff recommendation to reduce the Silver Spring Parking Lot District (PLD) tax rate in order to increase the General Fund Property Tax under the Charter Limit. The cuts recommended by the Council Staff related to the funds from the PLD are ill-advised.

It has been suggested that the reduction in funding for Silver Spring would be a temporary measure; however, there is no precedent that substantiates this concept. History suggests the action would become permanent.

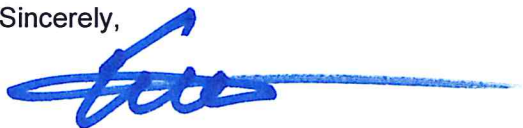
Due to the recession of the past few years, the Urban District budgets have been cut and at best remained flat in more recent years. The County Council ceased funding "baseline services" in the Urban District from the General Fund several years ago. However, the PLD has many new responsibilities on the horizon in terms of its development as an urban, residential community in the Silver Spring CBD. The obligation to maintain a clean, safe, and comfortable environment in the parking garages will extend well into the night. Resident citizens will expect the PLD to maintain a caretaker responsibility for cars parked overnight in County parking facilities.

The zeal to seek funding for other parts of the county at the expense of Silver Spring should be tempered with the realities associated with another Silver Spring fact; the Transit Center is not opening as had been planned. As such, the Interim Operating System will require funding for repairs and upkeep associated with roadways, sidewalks, signage, and bus shelters. These temporary measures have all outlived their intended period of usage and must also be funded. This is not the time to strip resources away from the PLD.

Rather than looking for ways to cut funding resources for Silver Spring, we encourage the antithesis as there remain several unfunded and underfunded needs therein. In order for the County to preserve the value of public and private investment in the Silver Spring Central Business District (CBD), encourage nightlife, create and enhance a comfortable place to be, and grow property assessments and revenue streams; it will require the PLD and the Urban District to create, carry out, and, continue an ambitious strategic plan. It is imperative that we remain steadfast in our commitment to the progress that has begun.

This committee respectfully opposes the Council's staff recommendation to reduce the Silver Spring Parking Lot District (PLD) Tax.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ernest Bland", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ernest Bland, RA
Chairman
Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee

CC: County Executive, Leggett
Council Member, Reimer